



Tu-160 bomber at
Borispol airport.

DOD (R.D. Ward)

Ukraine

as a Post-Cold War Military Power

By STEPHEN D. OLYNYK

Fifteen new independent entities were propelled by national security imperatives to create their own armed forces once the Soviet Union was dissolved. That process varied from state to state because of differences in interests and resources—ends and means. An instructive example is Ukraine, perhaps the most important of the emergent states after Russia. A country of 52 million people, the size of France, and rich in natural resources, it could be destined to play a central role in the

new geopolitical environment of eastern and central Europe.

The speed of the Soviet Union's breakup left its forces practically intact where they were deployed. While Russia proper retained the second-rate forces that were previously part of the central strategic reserve, the former republics on the western frontier, especially Ukraine and Belarus, inherited first-class force packages which were part of the second strategic echelon of the former western and southwestern theaters of operation of the Warsaw Pact.

Each of the newly independent states has dealt differently with its military inheritance. On one extreme, the

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Baltic states insisted that all former Soviet forces leave their territory as they built their own from scratch. Russia and the central Asian states were slower to form national forces, with some of the latter still not having accomplished that thus far. At the other extreme, Ukraine decided to nationalize former Soviet forces stationed on its territory except for strategic forces. Over 700,000 ground, air, and air defense forces along with 500,000 paramilitary troops were based in Ukraine. Motivated by national (regional) patriotism and economic considerations, most remained and swore allegiance to the new state. Only 20,000 officers departed to Russia or other former republics.

Legal Basis

Having declared complete independence on August 24, 1991, two days after the collapse of the putsch in Moscow, the Supreme *Rada* (parliament) realized that there was no military to protect the new nation. With a

brief decree Ukraine nationalized all conventional forces on its territory, the first former Soviet republic to do so. In the months that followed legislative acts provided a legal basis for the armed forces and created a rudimentary national security structure—with a ministry of defense, defense council, and national security council (the latter two were combined in 1995); the general staff of the armed forces of Ukraine; and three services. The laws also outlined a basic Ukrainian defense policy and the defense responsibilities and functions of various agencies and officials.

As approved by the *Rada*, the major tenets of military doctrine are preventing war, building the armed forces, and repelling aggression. Ukrainian security policy is defensive and based on nonintervention, respect for the national borders and independence of other states, and rejection of the use of force as an instrument of

policy. This is in stark contrast to Russian doctrine, which anticipates intervention outside its borders under conditions of a peripheral conflict or protection of Russian minorities in neighboring states. Because of political sensitivity, military doctrine—like Ukrainian security policy—avoids identifying a specific threat. Rather it refers to a “state whose consistent policy presents a military threat . . . [or] leads to interference in the internal affairs of Ukraine, or encroaches on its territorial integrity and its national interests.”

Military doctrine reemphasizes a statutory and political commitment to a non-nuclear status. It stresses the principle of “reasonable defense sufficiency” in determining the number and types of forces as well as the quantity and quality of conventional weapons. It puts a priority on developing modern, well-trained, and highly mobile forces with emphasis on precision weaponry, intelligence and electronic warfare, air and space defense, and airpower and seapower. To accomplish these objectives, this doctrine calls for a modern and economically rational defense industrial base.

In January 1997 the *Rada* adopted “The Concept of National Security of Ukraine,” a policy and strategy that contains principles, national interests, unspecified threats, objectives, organization and functions, and the roles of government agencies in security policy formulation. This document is very general in tone and reflects the continuing ambiguities present in defining Ukraine’s security interests, threats, and policy objectives.

The Soviet Legacy

Ukraine inherited only two services from the Soviet Union—an army and air force. Black Sea Fleet (BSF) assets remained under the de facto control of Moscow. On the ground, Ukraine gained control over five armies, one army corps, eighteen divisions (twelve motorized, four tank, and two airborne), three airborne brigades, three artillery divisions, and a host of combat support and combat service support units. It also inherited four air armies with assets that gave Ukraine the third largest air force in the world, including an inventory of long range

bombers, transports, strike aircraft, reconnaissance and electronic warfare planes, tactical and air defense fighters, and training aircraft. The air defense contingent consisted of one air defense army and three air corps. It was part of the air force but since has been made into a fourth service branch.

In autumn 1991 there was a Ukraine navy in name only, with the command and control structure being formed and negotiations just starting over the division of the Black Sea Fleet. But the new nation did inherit and get control of a substantial part of Soviet shipbuilding capacity as well as Black Sea shore naval facilities.

As for strategic forces, Ukraine became by default the world's third largest nuclear power, with 176 land-based ICBMs (1,240 warheads), 41 strategic nuclear bombers (460 warheads on bombs and cruise missiles), and tactical nuclear weapons; the latter were transferred to Russia in 1993.

After intensive negotiations by Ukraine, Russia, and the United States, and with the U.S. and Russian accession to three key Ukrainian demands (security guarantees after Ukraine becomes non-nuclear, financial assistance to dismantle missiles, and compensation for the missile material), a tripartite agreement was signed in January 1994 that provided for Ukraine to de-nuclearize itself within seven years. One month later parliament ratified the START I treaty and in November

the only truly successful reform has been in the area of force reduction

1994 a new parliament overwhelmingly approved the Non-proliferation Treaty thereby underscoring the intent to become a non-nuclear state. By June 1996 Ukraine had transferred all strategic nuclear warheads to Russia, ahead of schedule. The bombers went to Russia in payment for outstanding debts. But the expensive destruction of missiles and silos and environmental cleanup (especially of liquid rocket propellants) had just begun. With the removal of the weapons, strategic



Ukrainian and
U.S. marines.

Vitysko Ukrainy

forces were gradually reduced and resettled in housing provided with U.S. and German financial assistance.

The State of Reform

There have been several attempts at military reform since the armed forces were organized. The first three ministers of defense have had a master plan, but each failed to have it implemented before leaving office because of a lack of funds and indecisiveness on the part of the defense leadership. What these plans had in common was

a call for force reduction, defense industrial conversion, and force modernization. Each reform package proposed reorganizing administration and command, redeploying forces to adapt them to new military and geopolitical realities, reconfiguring the force structure, and reducing manpower and equipment to maintain "reasonable defense sufficiency" and meet the ceilings imposed by the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE).

The services. The only truly successful reform so far has been in the area of force reduction. In October 1993 the Rada approved an end strength of 450,000. This strength is currently 371,000—down from 726,000 in 1992. By July 1995 Ukraine met CFE

limits in personnel and selected conventional weapons. Reformers reconfigured the old Soviet "army" structure of the ground forces into army corps as the highest echelon of command and control, and personnel have been reduced to 161,000—down from 245,000 in 1992. Plans are also underway to further shrink these ground forces to 95,000 by 2005.

The four Soviet air armies have been restructured into two aviation corps and one naval aviation group. Air force personnel are being reduced to 78,000 this year. Combat planes will be cut from 1,090 to 590 by 2005. The air defense forces, which have become a separate service, have been reorganized into three air defense corps with an anticipated strength of 36,000 by 2005—down from 67,000 in 1992.

Building a navy has been plagued for years by a tug of war between Ukraine and Russia over their shares of BSF and basing rights. Early on, the Russian command surreptitiously transferred some of the better ships to its Northern Fleet. After several summit meetings and agreements that were never implemented, Presidents Boris Yeltsin and Leonid Kuchma agreed at

Sochi in June 1995 to divide BSF in half; then Ukraine would give Russia 32 percent of its share as payment for debts and use the remainder either to refurbish its own nascent navy or sell it for scrap.

This agreement was solidified by the two presidents in a comprehensive treaty of cooperation between Russia and Ukraine signed on May 31, 1997 in Kiev. Under the terms of the treaty Russia formally recognized Sevastopol as an integral part of Ukrainian territory and Ukraine agreed to lease three bays at Sevastopol naval base to Russia for BSF use over the next twenty years. Ukraine will also have basing rights at a separate bay in the port for its navy. This development may have resolved what was a highly charged political issue in both countries.

The nucleus of an independent navy is being formed primarily around coastal defense ships built in Ukraine's shipyards and the BSF craft already under its operational command and control. Meantime, some of its new ships have been taking part in regional naval exercises with neighbors and selected NATO naval exercises under the Partnership for Peace (PFP) program. Finally, while Ukraine has taken over most BSF shore-based facilities, it is unable for the time being to allocate the resources necessary to sustain a substantial shipbuilding capability.

At the direction of the president, a plan known as the "State Program for the Building and Development of the Ukrainian Armed Forces for the Year 2005" was adopted in December 1996. It is the most serious reform to be attempted so far and covers roles and missions, force structure, budgeting, modernization, and the organization of the ministry of defense and general staff. Initial emphasis for 1997 is on upgrading the air force and navy and developing a "rapid reaction force" as the nucleus of Ukrainian defense posture—a fully manned, equipped, and ready contingent. Details of the program have not as yet been released.

Military districts. In 1992 the three former Soviet military districts in Ukraine (Carpathian, Odessa, and Kiev) were reorganized into two operational districts (Carpathian and

Odessa) and one administrative (Central Command in Kiev). Odessa was extended to cover the southeastern length of the Ukrainian-Russian border, but for reasons of political sensitivity no separate district was established in eastern Ukraine to cover the length of its border with Russia. However, a limited number of restructured operational forces were deployed to eastern regions.

In autumn 1996 a new experimental type of military district was established in the northeast, centered in Chernihiv and designated as the Northern Operational/Territorial Command (OTC), with an army corps-level headquarters. This was an apparently makeshift way of filling the void in this critical defense perimeter. The current reform program envisions converting the present districts into three OTCs (Western, Southern, and Central) by 2005.

Military education. Ukraine inherited 34 military schools and faculties at 78 institutions of higher learning, far too many for its needs. Many reforms have been attempted and Kuchma has criticized the excessive turbulence in the military education system. By the end of 1996, after false starts and squandered resources, these institutions were reduced. Survivors include the Academy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Kiev), Military University (Kharkiv), and Medical Academy; three joint (interdisciplinary) military colleges; and five service branch colleges. In addition, there are six lyceums (mid-level military schools) and military faculties (departments) at 48 institutions of higher learning. Research centers also will be maintained in space and military meteorology, C³ and electronic warfare, air defense, air combat, naval operations, procurement, and education and socio-psychological service.

In June 1996 the new Academy of the Armed Forces of Ukraine graduated its first class of 178 officers who will assume senior positions in the armed forces and ministry. At the same time 15 universities and institutes graduated 4,700 junior lieutenants in 150 military specialties.

Sociological Concerns

The military leadership must confront some serious issues before they can claim success in making reforms. When the armed forces were nationalized, they inherited a number of problems related to morale, discipline, readiness, and combat sustainability.

Force conversion and quality of life. While equipment reductions mandated by CFE were carried out quickly and smoothly, reducing personnel has been a daunting task. It is complicated by a commitment to generous entitlements which provide quarters, retraining and job placement, or social security for thousands of commissioned and noncommissioned officers released since 1992 in downsizing. More significantly, it has made officers still on active duty unsure of the future and has eroded their morale and interest in a military career.

The military shares the economic hardship of the entire population. They get comparatively low salaries which often have been delayed since 1995, in many cases for months. They line up to rent apartments like other prospective tenants. Some officers have organized illegal associations to lobby for their personal welfare. There have been demonstrations by officers and their families. In recent years the better qualified officers, especially in the ground forces, have left the service in search of opportunities in the private sector. This has especially been true of new officers, a native product, who after receiving a good education become disenchanted with economic conditions and leave on completing their short-term military obligation. President Kuchma recently called for the extension and enforcement of officer obligations.

All members of the armed forces have sworn allegiance to the Ukrainian state. But how many did so out of loyalty rather than because of economic or opportunistic motives is difficult to determine. The downturn in the economy has harmed morale and operational readiness, strained civil-military relations, and called into question the loyalty of the military in a crisis. It has also led to declining discipline. The rate of no-shows among recruits has gone up as has absenteeism without

Removing SS-19
missile from silo.



BTR-80 APC on
the Dnipro.



Vysko Ukrany

leave and outright desertion. Crime committed by servicemen also has risen. Exacerbating low morale in the enlisted ranks is the continuation of an often brutal barrack hazing widespread in the former Soviet forces and passed on to post-Soviet armies.

Ethnic relations. In the early years of independence there was a serious

the Ukrainization of the officer corps has shown great improvement

ethnic imbalance within the armed forces resulting from a deliberate Soviet policy of intermixing officers of various nationalities following World War II. Non-Russians were assigned to the Russian Republic and Russian officers, especially generals, were overwhelmingly assigned to non-Russian republics. In January 1992 ethnic Russians reportedly comprised 90 percent of general officers, 60 percent of field

grade officers, and 50 percent of general staff officers in the Ukrainian armed forces. The situation gradually became more favorable to ethnic Ukrainians of company grade, especially as schools graduated cohorts of native Ukrainian commissioned and warrant officers. But the ministry of defense estimates there are still more than 150,000 ethnic officers serving outside Ukraine, mostly in the Russian Federation, many of whom want to come home. The situation

has improved in the enlisted ranks, which since independence have been drawn from within the country, making them a better ethnic reflection of overall society, which is 73 percent ethnic Ukrainian.

The Ukrainization of the officer corps has shown great improvement.

By September 1995 military schools had graduated 27,000 new officers, the majority of Ukrainian nationality. During this period 33,000 Ukrainian officers were brought in from other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, mostly from Russia. As of July 1995, ethnic Ukrainian officers accounted for 63 percent of regimental commanders, 72 percent of division commanders, 69 percent of corps commanders (seven corps), all directors of main directorates of the ministry, and all deputies to the minister of defense. Moreover, 67 percent of all generals and admirals were Ukrainian, 26 percent Russian, and 6 percent other nationalities.

Language of command. Closely related to ethnic composition is the language of command and communication. Russian was always the language of the Soviet armed forces which made it a powerful tool of Russification. That was abetted by an intensive Russification program in society at large, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. It not only hindered development of non-Russian military and technical terminology but also the use of non-Russian languages in the armed forces. It will be some time before Ukrainian becomes institutionalized as the language of command and communication. Until then it will remain a source of dissonance within the military.

Reeducation program. All senior officers were brought up in a closeted environment and indoctrinated with communist ideology and a Soviet world

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BTR-70 APC, Bosnia.

Vysko Ukrainy

outlook. They were taught to think of themselves as part of an elite social class in Soviet (not national) society and imbued with Russian military traditions and history. This was a socio-psychological view in which there was no room for any reference to Ukrainian military tradition or history prior to 1917. After August 1991 many of these officers, largely disoriented by the rapid collapse of the Soviet Union, found themselves in the Ukrainian national armed forces and asked to swear allegiance to a new state that could hardly have been imagined only a few months earlier. Thus the military leadership of Ukraine has been faced with a giant and sensitive task—the political reeducation of its inherited officer corps.

The Rada abolished the former Soviet political officer structure and adopted the Educational and Socio-Psychological Service (ESPS), a structure organized down to company level or its equivalent. It was designed to impart the basic tenets of Ukrainian history, language, and military tradition and promote democratization of the armed forces. The university-level Kiev Institute of Humanities was established to train officers for ESPS duty in units and commands.

Reeducation efforts, especially attempts to strengthen national identity and promote the use of the Ukrainian language, has understandably created

tension within the armed forces, largely due to an ambitious initial program under the first minister of defense. It has been toned down under subsequent ministers to make it more marketable (particularly to old-time former Soviet officers). The fourth minister, General-Colonel Oleksandr Kuzmuk, has pledged to reinvigorate such efforts; but the languid economy and social privations of the military temper any enthusiasm for them.

Civil-Military Relations

During five years of independence civil-military relations have generally been normal. The armed forces have not been politicized although the conditions for politization exist. Members of the armed forces, for example, are elected to parliament while on active duty although unassigned. The large and influential Association of Ukrainian Officers, with its active, reserve, and retired members, has been involved in electoral politics. There are also signs of a wider destabilization in civil-military relations because of the inadequate defense budget, pay problems, alienation in the officer corps, dissension among the top leadership, rumors of corruption, and squandering of resources.

Civilian control over the military is not fully institutionalized. Traditional control—through the president and parliament—needs to be extended to the level of the defense establishment as it is in all democratic states. From 1991 until 1994, all the ministers of defense and their deputies were military officers in the Soviet mold. In August 1994 Kuchma named a civilian, Valeriy Shmarov, as minister of defense, making Ukraine the first CIS country to take that step. Shortly thereafter, two other high-level defense posts—for the military-industrial complex and foreign relations—also were occupied by civilians. But the responsibilities of both the minister of defense and chief of the general staff were not legally delineated, and the ministry became ridden with internal civil-military conflict. Finally in July 1996, as a result of controversy over proposed military reforms and the public outcry over alleged mismanagement, corruption, and retreat from the “Ukrainization” of the armed forces, Shmarov was replaced by General Kuzmuk. This was viewed in many quarters both at home and abroad as a regressive step in democratization of the armed forces and the enhancement of civilian control of the military.

Since independence the armed forces have been held in relatively high esteem by society at large, though this feeling has not extended to young men of draft age. The recent increase in desertions and voluntary departures by junior officers is mostly due to economic hardships and not the prestige of the army. There are examples of civilian support of the economically struggling military: regional administrations agreeing to build one ship each for the nascent Ukrainian navy; private enterprises donating funds to build quarters, schools, and other amenities; and cultural groups touring bases at their own expense to entertain the troops.

Force Structure

By the end of 1996 the Ukrainian armed forces consisted of the following strengths (declared strengths for 1992 are shown in parentheses): personnel, 395,000 (726,00), not including paramilitary formations such as national

guard or various internal, border, rail-road, or construction troops; tanks, 4,026 (6,300); air cushioned vehicles, 5,050 (6,170); artillery, 3,727 (3,080); anti-tank weapons, 6,000; surface-to-air missile sites, 934; aircraft, 1,090 (1,380); combat helicopters, 240 (240); and ships, 73. It is the largest force in Europe after that of Russia. But it has deficiencies. Ukraine, like Russia, cloaks its defense budget in secrecy. Information is only made public when the ministry or its supporters complain about inadequate appropriations. The budget for 1996 was 1.9 percent of GNP and estimates for 1997 were 1.3 percent. This was a quarter of the actual amount requested and left nothing for modernization after military pay.

Speaking to senior officers in December 1996, President Kuchma painted a bleak picture of the current military posture. He addressed four major areas—force structure and organization, modernization, readiness, and sustainability—and judged each as unsatisfactory.

Force structure and organization. In the five years since the formation of the armed forces, planners have not succeeded in developing tables of organization for various levels of military units and staffs to reflect new roles and missions, a point on which the president was highly critical. Many units

are not properly manned under existing tables, which impacts on readiness. Similarly, reformers have failed to agree upon a new force structure in the ground army, which is still in part Soviet-vintage and does not meet national defense requirements.

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force packages to meet specific operational requirements. In contrast to Soviet force structure, Ukrainian plans do not include either cadre or partially manned units. By reducing the number of tank divisions and converting artillery divisions to artillery brigades and airborne units to air mobile forces, planners have stressed defensive instead of offensive combat or force projection capability in ground forces. The ongoing albeit fiscally constrained conversion of motorized rifle divisions and brigades into mechanized divisions and brigades will afford them greater mobility and maneuverability.

There is an adequate force reconstitution capability. The Soviet mobilization structure with its commissariats is still basically intact. Ukraine has a pool of a million men who have served in the military within the last five years, which would permit the generation of new forces.

Modernization. Ukraine inherited a vast military-industrial complex—roughly one third of the Soviet total. It also contains some 15 percent of former Soviet defense industrial and military research and development facilities and ranks as the second-largest producer of arms and military equipment after Russia among the successor states. It can assemble all major categories of military hardware, and some facilities have unique capabilities such as shipbuilding and missile production.

Ukraine has sold main battle tanks (T-72 and T-83) to the Third World (for instance, 300 T-83s to Pakistan in 1996) and is active in the foreign arms market (14th in the volume of its arms trade).

On the down side, the breakup of the Soviet Union and economic reform caused a hiatus in modernization as the industrial base endured disruptions in research, development, production, and fielding systems. A major shortcoming is that only a very small percentage of military production was “a closed cycle.” As a result of deliberate manufacturing interdependence in the former Soviet Union, Ukraine still depends on Russia for many components and subassemblies. Its military-industrial complex has been reduced from

700 enterprises during the Soviet period to 400 in 1996, and production has fallen to 10 percent of 1991 levels. Research, development, and evaluation is largely underfunded, especially in areas such as anti-tank weapons, air defense systems, support of airborne and air mobile operations, and C³I. With improvements in the national economy and an increased budget, the defense sector has the potential for remedying these shortfalls. It has the production capability, material resources, and trained manpower. But as the president indicated in his speech to the military collegium, defense leaders have failed to develop a master plan to reform the military-industrial complex and its capacity to generate new technology. As a result he ordered that such a plan be completed by mid-1997.

Readiness. The Ukrainian military inherited sufficiently equipped and qualified personnel. It has excellent training facilities and more than enough professional schools. But forces have been downsizing and restructuring under the deteriorating economy, which affects near-term readiness. Primarily for budgetary reasons the army has had trouble holding scheduled field training exercises to maintain its combat proficiency and conduct operational testing of major equipment. Although Ukraine is second to Russia in military fuel storage capacity and has large strategic fuel reserves, current operational fuel shortage has constrained normal training in the ground army and air force, restricting military vehicular and airplane traffic to the bare minimum. Pilots have not been able to log sufficient hours. The ground army and air force have weak logistical infrastructures that have not been fully reconfigured to meet specific defense needs.

Kuchma revealed in a December 1996 speech that as many as 191 mechanized infantry and tank battalions were rated not ready, adding, “This is especially dangerous in the forward-based units securing the nation’s borders.” In the last two or three years the air force lost 2,500 air crew members via voluntary departures; in

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are not properly manned under existing tables, which impacts on readiness. Similarly, reformers have failed to agree upon a new force structure in the ground army, which is still in part Soviet-vintage and does not meet national defense requirements.

On a more positive note, emphasis has been placed on developing a quick reaction force with emphasis on mobility and maneuverability. By abolishing the operational armies, establishing the corps as the primary command and control maneuver organization, and increasing the number of independent brigades, planners have favored smaller, lighter units that can form

the bomber units only every third crew is rated ready; in the combat air units only three are combat ready while 25 are rated barely ready and 17 not ready. Air defense forces have conducted their first exercise since 1991; and since independence the leaders of the armed forces have failed to establish a single air defense system covering Ukrainian air space.

Semi-annual call ups have been barely adequate, primarily due to deferments (for example, in autumn 1993 two-thirds of all eligible men received some form of reprieve). In addition, both no-shows and desertions have been on the rise. The short post-commission obligation has resulted in massive departure of junior officers, creating a serious shortfall in second and first lieutenants. As Kuchma said, "In general, I judge the state of combat and mobilization capabilities of the army as unacceptably low." He ascribed this not only to the economy but lack of initiative, imagination, and decisiveness as well as "dilettantism" on the part of high-level staff officers, commanders, and the top echelons of the ministry of defense (which he has ordered cut by 1,000 officers).

Nonetheless, Ukraine should be able to forge a ready force. Many troops have had combat experience in Afghanistan, including some 3,000 generals and other officers on active duty. In the last four years, over 7,000 have performed U.N. peacekeeping missions worldwide, especially in Bosnia and Africa, at times under combat conditions. Ukraine has contributed support helicopters and is the third largest provider of strategic air transport to such operations.

Ukraine joined the PFP program in February 1994. Since then it has taken part in various exercises with central and eastern European and NATO forces. This year a special battalion-size unit was organized to provide mission-oriented training for peace operations. Bilaterally, Ukraine and Poland have organized a combined mechanized infantry battalion under rotational command. These activities are giving the military added albeit

limited experience in the field and at sea as well as an introduction to NATO military organization and operations.

Sustainability. Given the weaknesses indicated above, sustainability—the ability to deploy sufficient forces and conduct sustained combat operations—can be rated as fair to poor. This will persist until adequate numbers of operational maneuver units and combat service support elements are reorganized, equipped, and trained. Both the army and the air force must rebuild their logistic infrastructures in order to field and sustain forces for a high-intensity conflict. The current force could conduct short-term combat operations but not a long war. Nevertheless, Ukraine is a serious regional military power even in its present situation. It can defend its western borders and provide a credible near-term deterrent on its eastern borders. This capability will be improved by reforms and other components of military power—force structure, readiness, and modernization—as they achieve normal levels.

The U.S. Connection

Defense and military contacts between the United States and Ukraine have been substantial since a memo of understanding and cooperation was signed by Washington and Kiev in July 1993. These contacts have included visits by the senior leadership and high level staff exchanges; service and combatant command visits and staff exchanges; major combined exercises such as Sea Breeze '96, Peace Shield '95 and '96, and Cooperative Nugget '97 which is currently underway; unit level visits and exchanges; port calls and ship visits; student exchanges; and various relationships involving members of the national guard, civil defense, and border guard units from Ukraine and the Army National Guard from the United States.

One new initiative is planning for an NCO development and education program to upgrade the Ukrainian NCO corps. Senior officers have attended courses at the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in Germany since it opened its doors in 1994. A seminar program is being developed by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at

Harvard for defense officials and senior officers. Finally, Ukraine has been active in PFP with U.S. assistance.

The armed forces which Ukraine inherited from the former Soviet Union have provided the nation with military leaders, manpower, and matériel to qualify as a major regional actor. Unless the national economy improves very soon, however, this force will lack the foundation to reform, maintain readiness, and modernize. In fact, as weapons and military equipment age modernization will be a burden on the frail national economy and will stifle recovery.

The Ukrainian military constitutes an important arm of the state structure and has played a major role in nation-building. The armed forces ensure national defense in a region suffering from a security vacuum since the collapse of Soviet power and provide the government and society with a large pool of educated and trained professionals. As in most new states, the military is a symbol of national pride, professing strong patriotism and setting an example of unselfish support to the common good. It serves as a school for acculturation and socialization by providing its soldiers, sailors, and airmen with a shared national and social milieu. In a weakly-defined nation, the armed forces are a positive integrating influence. At the same time, unlike some former Soviet republics, especially Russia, they have not been significantly politicized and in many ways are a stabilizing factor. In accepting a civilian minister of defense, the military consented to another level of control and paved the way for further democratization. In general, Ukraine has enjoyed normal and sound civil-military relations with good prospects for the future unless its security is either destabilized or its economy fails to improve.

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